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A MATIONAL SUGAR INDUSTRY - TO IMPORT AND REFINE OR TO SHOW AND MANUFACTURE

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World tonnage output of white sugar is 25-30 per cent of milled rice production and 20 per cent of wheat. Sugar was usually sold at two to three times the price of wheat per ton and about double the price of milled rice, until the widespread drought of 1972 caused the price of rice to increase out of proportion.

Production of white sugar has been increasing at nearly 4 per cent compound a year from 1957 to 1972, from 40m to 70m tens a year, while a very consistent 43 per cent of it has been derived from sugar beet, the rest of it being from sugar cane.

The projected rate of increase is now about 2.7m . tons a year, which is the output of 45 large factories, each making 60,000 tons a year.

Of the 122 countries listed in the 1972 year book of the International Sugar Organisation, 23 produce no sugar at all and many others import some of their requirements, either as raw sugar, which is brown to black in colour, for home refining, or as white sugar ready for the retail market.

A large, but unrecorded amount of sugar cane is grown in the Indian sub-continent and a great deal of it is processed us a cottage industry, the crops in tiny plots of a few hundred square metres. This cane is crudely milled by bullock power and the juices boiled down to a nutriticus sticky brown mass of crystals, using the crushed cane fibres (bagasse) as fupl. This bagasse contains upwards of a quarter of the sugar juices of the cane so this entensive village industry is a wasteful one in comparison with modern large mills which extract over 90 per cent of the sugar in the forms of crystallised sugar and molasses.

Annual consumption of white sugar a head is rising slowly and is nearly 20 kg. But with the hundreds of millions of the Indian sub-continent eating their sugar from the village industries, overall sugar consumption must be appreciably higher.

Sugar beet is a large-scale intensive annual crop grown only for industrial-scale processing. It lacks fuel as a by-product, unlike cane, and has no attractions for a village industry. Beet is normally considered to be a temperate orop and it is grown in Finlane, over 60 degrees north of the equator. For a long time its cultivation was believed to be commercially impossible within 32 degrees of the equator, due to its need for long summer days for growth. However, experiments in the Indian sub-continent are showing that some varieties will grow successfully as spring crops south of the Himalayas and also on the south Indian plateau down to about 14 degrees north of the equator.

The best ripens by the time the cane crop has been harvested. The best is then fed to special best equipment for the extraction of its sugar-bearing juice which is very similar to cane juice. The processing of the best juice to crystal sugar and molasses is virtually identical with cane

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juice and enables the large investment in a factory to be profitably employed for an extra nonth or so a year, during which fresh came can no longer be supplied.

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For a country starting or extending its sugar industry, the options can be seen to be wide, ranging from the simple building of a refinery supplied with imported raw sugar, to growing both cane and beet for factory processing into white sugar and supplementing these local crops with imported raw sugar for pefining outside the two harvesting seasons.

TO IMPORT R TO GROW

The basic decision is whether to depend on other countries with surpluses of raw sugar to supply the new home refinery or to grow best or cane, or even both, to supply a fully fledged factory which will need equipment for extracting, clarifying, and evaporating the juices as well as the refinery's equipment for crystallising out the sugar from the thick sugary liquid.

The open market for raw sugar is one of the most volatile in the world and London prices per long ton have ranged from \$18 in 1966 to £150 at the time of writing, a ratio of one to eight. The reason is that 85 per cent of the sugar made, raw or white, has closed markets with guaranteed prices. A bad erop year can cut the average free market input of say 10m tons to 5m, and the resultant pressure on free stocks causes the price to rocket. The free market price of sugar is also perticularly sensitive to any risk of a major war. With peace re-established firmly and several good crops, the price h_r collepsed to below the cost of production in 1961 and 1985-66.

It is clear that a sugar refinery as the starting point of a national sugar industry is a most unpredictable investment

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with countries with large surpluses of raw sugar.

One advantage of a refinery is that it can operate throughout the year, unlike most beet or cane factories which are generally limited to harvesting seasons of only four to six months. The daily output capacity of a refinery need only be half or a third of a factory fed with beet or cane. Also, the refinery does not have very expensive equipment needed for extracting the sugar juices. The foreign exchange cost of a refinery is therefore likely to be about a quarter of a complete factory with the same annual production of sugar.

In view of the accelerated world-wide inflation, it is not possible to quote very firm figures but a factory making 60,000 tons of sugar a year from cane or beet might cost say 28m . of which the foreign exchange would be 25m . An equivalent refinery, to cover losses, would need about 66,000 tons a year of raw sugar, costing today about 210m . and svill 25.6m . if the price returns to a more realistic level of 2100 a ton. This is far in excess of the once-off saving in foreign exchange of purchasing a refinery at 21.25m instead of a complete factory of the same annual sugar output at 25m

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Even if raw sugar could be regularly obtained at the recent Commonwealth Sugar Agreement price of £50 to £60 a ton plus freight, the imports of raw sugar would cost about £4m , a year, still more than the once-off saving in foreign exchange capital cost of the refinery compared with a complete factory.

The argument, so far, is clearly against importing raw sugar, but it assumes that a sugar crop can be grown in the home country. This assumption now requires examination. "It rests on the availability of both agricultural land and rainfall or irrigation.

Both cane and beet have been intensively developed during the 20th century, particularly beet. A modern beet orop is usually 38-43 tons a hectare from which the factory extracts 5 tons of crystal sugar. This is half as high again as the standards of even twenty years ago, at the same levels of cultivation. A cone crop of 100 tons a hectare is nothing unusual now, with enough irrigation and fertilisers, and 10 tons of crystal sugar can be extracted from it. But a peasant's crop, with no artificial and little natural fertiliser and depending on irregular rain, is likely to be only 25 to 40 tons a hectare yielding as little as.24 to 3 tons of sugar in the factory. Unoccupied land capable of growing same sugar without irrigation hardly exists any nore. In starting a new area of cane, the choice lies between surface, or gravity, irrigation or overhead spray irrigation. The latter method surprisingly needs far less water than any other form of surface irrigation, which mey use over 2,500mm. a year. On land with poor drainage this reduced water is a valuable feature as there is far less tendency for salts in the soil to rise and reduce the yields and render the soil sterile in time. Cane is particularly allergic to salt in the soil, unlike beet which has been developed from a seashore root.

In comparing beet and cane crops, it must be remembered that beet occupies the land for six to nine conths, and land that has been used for early harvested beet can be quickly prepared for a winter cereal or a forage crop. Beet will grow well in temperate countries in deep soils where the annual rainfall is under 600mm. and without irrigation. Cane, an annual grass, takes a full twolve months to mature but then produces another crop, called a rateon, a year later and it may go on rateoning for years, usually at successively lower yields.

In spite of these extreme differences between a tropical

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grass and a temperate root as scarces of such similar sugar bearing juices, each is likely to contribute 60 to 70 per cent of the total factory cost of the sugar. In other words, the sugar manufacturing process adds about 50 per cent to the agricultural costs of a ton of sugar.

The large leafy green tops of beet are cut off in the field and can be carted and ensilaged or fed in the field, slightly wilted, to cattle, sheep or goats. This is a particularly valuable by-product of beet in the dry countries and in the sub-tropics, when no natural green fodder still

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remains by the time of the beet harvest.

Cane tops, sliced off and discarded at hervest, can also be fed to animals but the labour of collecting and taking them from the cane field is considerable and not really economic, in most circumstances.

When world markets are in balance despite some inevitable inflation, the value of a sugar crop per hectare is likely to be at least twice that of a cercal crop grown on the same land, both at the same standards of cultivation. In developing countries, the sugar farmers normally receive more agricultural credits and advice than they do for their original cereal or fodder crops and crop values per hectare have been known to rise by a factor of three or even four. This help for the sugar crops usually comes from the factory owners whose processing operations benefit from ample high quality crops; a simple example of onlightened self-interest.

The result of a big increase in farm sales per hectare may or may not be a corresponding increase in farm net profits but it inovitably means far more money passing through the hands of the farmer. The high standards of cultivation encouraged and usually paid for by the factory means more labour and material inputs per hectare for cultivation, harvesting and transport to the factory. A cane sugar crop can weigh up to 50 times as much as a middling cereal crop per hectare and even beet is likely to weigh 20 times as much.

A farmer accustomed to receiving £50 a hectare for his under-fertilized wheat or maize finds himself selling his hectare of sugar crop for £200 to £400, most of which he has disbursed or committed already for extra labour, fertilizer, use of machinery, transportation and other inputs and loan interest yet to be paid. Whether he then has a gross profit of £25 or £100 to spend exactly as he likes makes no real difference to the national economy. His priorities are likely to be more varied food, better clothing and house-hold goods, probably all of local manufacture in any country that is espable of growing a sugar crop.

The really important point is not what he buys - whether for farm capital, crop input or just for a higher living standard - but that he is a far greater market for the rest of his countrymen. And not for goods only; he will spend more on services too; a bigger bank loan to pay interest on, more local and national taxes, more specialised farm and personal services.

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It is not just his extra net or gross profit, say 250 a hectare instead of 220, that benefits his countrymon. He will disburse his whole sales income, say 2200 instead of 250 a hectare. Even if he has surplus each, he is nowadays more likely to use a bank account for its safety rather than trying to obtain bullion to bury under his hearth. The bank will lend this access of funds again and again, so keeping it circulating to everyone's benefit.

It is universally accepted that any successful productive enterprise not only creates direct profits linked to the extra Gross National Product (GNP) but also so-called secondary benefits. These include the increased markets for goods and services resulting from the higher earnings of workers, the higher turnovers and therefore profits of manufacturers, merchants and retailers selling to the project and to each other, higher cernings of service workers and, of course, higher taxes.

Some economists prefer to work on the assumption that the amount of these secondary benefits is the same for any given amount of investment of whatever kind it is. Once this assumption is made, there is no point in trying to evaluate the secondary benefit in any particular investment because any alternative investment in the same place, and equally successful, would have the same secondary benefit. The assumption makes for speed and simplicity in comparing one

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investment opportunity with another. Only the primary profitabilities need to be calculated over a period of years and discounted to their present values or to give the internal rates of return on the investment.

However, no known proof of the accuracy of this assumption has been either offered to, or discovered by, the writer and it does therefore seem to him to be in the same category of assumption as one held firmly, until quite a recent date in history, that the sun goes round the earth.

No complete calculations of secondary benefits of investments seem to have been made yet and indeed variables become so numerous that the task must be extremely difficult, even with the aid of a computer. The variables tend to be subjective ones too, particularly on forecasting what entirely may investments may be made if the initial investment is successful.

Nevertheless, the writer and a colleague made a start seven years ago on calculating the flow of cash that it appears unst inevitably result if a productive investment, say upgrading cultivation on a group of farms, succeeds in increasing the gross farm sales, but without <u>further</u> outside investment. No algebra was involved, merely the mundane arithmetic of double-entry accounting.

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CALCULATING REGIONAL SECONDARY BENEFITS

The model chosen here to illustrate the method is of a traditionally cereal growing area which has been changed over to continuous sugar cane at a higher standard of cultivation. The cane crop sales are £10,000 a working day higher than the sales were of cereals, say £4m instead of £1m for a 300 day year. This £4m worth of cane could represent the annual cane requirements of a big modern factory making 60,000 tons of sugar a year.

The farmers, and the farm-workers who of course receive some of the £4m . as wages, are assumed to spend all that money in the nearest market town at a steady rate throughout the year. This is the simplest possible case. The calculations for spending in a city, at intervals, as well as in the market town are also straight-forward, but much more voluminous and propertionally more difficult to explain in a short paper. Appendix I gives a typical calculation for what happens in the market town when the farming people spend the extra £10,000 a day from their sugar erop on farm inputs and personal requirements of goods and services.

A market town owes its existence entirely to its function of supplying its surrounding farms with goods which it obtains from ports and cities, and with service facilities which require no flow of outside supplies. The town's working

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population naturally sell goods and services t each other as well as to the farmers. But if the farmers were to switch all their custom to another market town or to a city, the first town would die. There would be no cash flowing into that town to pay for the goods it needs for its own consumption and the cit.sens cannot make a living on exchanging their services taking in each others' washing. By definition, a market town is not a manufacturing town.

The degree of increased prosperity of our model market town depends not only on the extra inflow of farm cash, taken as £10,000 a day, but on how much of that is spent on goods which have to be replaced .- and on services, which have not. Money spent by farmers on services circulates round the town initially, creating local income, GNP. But most of the money spent on goods, that is the wholesale cost of the goods, leaves the town quickly, to pay for replacements; only the gress profit remains and circulates. Therefore the higher the proportion of fair spending in the town on services, as against goous, the greater the gross profits of the merchants and the receipts of service workers, including the tax collector. This is the most important variable. Appendix I uses an 80/20 Guoda/Service spending ratio for farmers, and for the townspeople too, for the sake of simplicity. The other variable, unexpectedly less important, is the weighted average mark-up

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on goods sold in the town. This is about 35 per cent in the U.K. but it was found to be only slightly less in a major island of Indonesia and in South fatrice; perhaps coincidences. Appendix I is bised on a mark-up of 33.3 per cent.

Appendix JI shows the effect of changes in these two variables on the secondary benefits, all GNP, created in the market town by farm spending of £10,000 a day. At the 80/20 Geods/Service ratio, (GSR), the mecondary gross income created by the farm spending of £10,000 is £5,000 at a 20 per cent profit mark-up, about £6,100 at 30 per cent, and £7,400 at 40 per cent mark-ups, read off the graph. Appendix I calculates by double-entry that at 33.3 per cent mark-up, the gross profits of the shop-keepers are £4,735 (column 5) and receipts of service workers also happen to be £0,955 (declann 6), both figures from the bottom line; total £6,665 and all GNP.

Another interesting point in Appendix I is the balance of trade; the amount of money leaving the town for replacement goods exactly equals the farm spending, columns 3 and 4, last line. This should occur, inevitably, at any goods/service ratio or profit mark-up. The farm money enters the town, some of it turns over repeatedly creating wealth, but all of it must leave the town for the purchase of wholesale goods, at the same average rate as it enters the town. Otherwise, the

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town either runs into debt or accumulates idle cash or bullion.

Statistical data have been analysed to show that the GSR in the USA is about 50/50 and 60/40 in Great Britain; it ranges down to as low as 90/10 in an exceedingly poor but large group of shanty-town dwellers in South America. Prosperous small peasant farmers have been found with a GSR of 83/17.

Appendix II, using the 33.3 per cent mark-up, shows elearly that spending by farmers of £10,000 in the USA, 50/50 GRR, creates £16,600 of new wealth in their market towns, whereas farmers little above subsistence level with a 95/5 GRR create only £4,000 of new wealth in their market town.

By now it should be clear that the impacts of new preduntive expatilities on their immediate economic region can vary widely and should always be calculated. A menufacturing project which depends on importing its ray and other materials from outside its own region will do little good to that region. Similarly, a project importing its raw materials, etc., from shreed will produce little mational benefit in relation to smother consuming indigenous raw materials, and classical examples are sugar refineries importing raw sugar contrasted with sugar factories buying or growing their cane or beet in nearby areas.

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The wealth created in nanufacturing towns and citics, supplying the marketing town and purchasing the sugar production of the factory, can be calculated on similar lines to Appendix I. The increased depand for general goods by the market town enhances the profits in the city supplying the goods, whether the goods are of indigenous origin or imported. The city likewise acts as distributor for the sugar and earns a profit. It may, of course, lose its original profit on distributing imported sugar but the matter is calculable.

A full calculation for a typical case of greater farm sales output due to a well cultivated sugar crop, worth £4mm. a year instead of wheat worth £1mm. a year in a developing country, would be secondary GM of 150 per cent on the £3mm. growth of primary GMP, another £4.5mm., all of it arising in urban areas. In a developed country, the benefit to urban dreas would be about twice as high, due to their greater rélative spending on services instead of on goods.

The change-over from wheat to sugar beet does not necessarily call for great capital expenditure, but if irrigated cane replaces unirrigated wheat, capital expenditure will normally be heavy. Of course, the availability of irrigation enhances the value of the land.

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A calculation of the inevitable secondary benefits derived from a successful sugar factory project, which is combined with a switch from a Simn. a year wheat harvest to a £4m a year sugar crop, covers half a dozen large pages. It starts with an analysis of all the annual expenditure of the sugar factory to obtain its goods/service ratio; the importance of this ratio has already been explained. Any labour-intensive factory naturally has a relatively low goods/service ratio and it consequently generates more secondary benefits than a capitalintensive factory.

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With under-employment combined with the more obvious unemployment both rising in developing countries, (recently calculated at 50 per cent of the available labour force by the writer, for a Far Eastern count y), the industries they select should not only use indigenous raw materials but be inherently labour-intensive.

The secondary benefits are all in the form of local employment, in the final analysis. A subsistence farming family aces nothing to help the national economy and may be a net liability, whereas a prosperous peasent family, having a good surplus for sale and therefore with money to spend, can hardly help creating conditions which will keep two non-peasant famili in similar confortable conditions. The prosperous peasant is a market for goods and services, unlike the subsistence farmer. Better one prosperous peasant family starting a chain reaction of non-farming employment for two other families, then all three families just able to subsist.

A £15m sugar project, including some irrigation, could produce 25m . worth of sugar a year at the factory price from cane costing 24m . The profit might be up to 24m in 1974, but the inevitable secondary benefits to the urban and rural economics will normally lie between 240m . to 245m a year. In a particular instance, they have been calculated at 215m a year (87 per cent on the investment), after allowing for the loss of a wheat crop worth 24m . and for almost 22m . of extra imports covering factory chemicals and spares, more agricultural inputs and consumer goods demanded by a more prosperous community.

A refinery for imported raw sugar and making the same quantity of white sugar, 26m, worth is unlikely to create secondary benefits greater than the value of the refined sugar produced, 26m ., before deducting the cost of the imported raw sugar, at least 24.5m ., and also the cost of imports of refinery spares, materials, chemicals and increases in consumer goods. The annual net calculable secondary benefit is likely to be under the on a refinery investment of 22.5m. This is, say, 30-40 per cent against 87 per cent on the immigation - sugar factory

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of £15m . which showed £15m . a year net secondary benefits.

This enormous difference in the GNP as secondary benefits yer £1m . of total investment, say £0.35m . against £0.87m ., is mainly because the refinery has to spend such a large propertion of its gross sales turnover on importing its raw material.

GENERAL POINTS FOR THE CONTROL OF A SUGAR INDUSTRY

In the Field

The costing and accounting controls for cane sugar estates and factories are often crude and far below the general level of those of beet sugar factories.

For both sources of sugar, it is essential to buy sugar and not just vegetable matter containing some sugar. The farmers should be paid for the sugar in their product as measured by sampling on delivery at the factory. A special bonus for higher than average sugar content can also work wondors on the sugar content of the harvests and it saves the factory expenditure in handling and processing some of the useless non-sugars.

If the factory grows its own sugar crop, each field should be, and sometimes is, standard costed individually. Its own actual and standard inputs of labour, machine time, including bfansport, seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, and even irrigation water particularly if it is pumped, are debited to the field card which is later credited with the tons of cane, beet, or better still, the sugar, it has produced. For ratoon sugar crops these cards are particularly valuable; they show when the cost of sugar per ton in the crop rises to an uneconomic level above the standard cost, as the weight of the annual harvest falls off with successive rations.

Transport and handling of sugar crops are big items of expense; eight to ten tons of regarable matter per ton of crystal sugar manufactured. Double handling is to be avoided. Beet is usually handled very simply; straight off the field into the vehicle that dumps it into the silos (concrete canalc) at the factory, whence it is floated to huge best pumps which lift it into the factory for mechanical slicing.

Cane tends to be handled too often; first hand-piled after hand-cutting; hand-loaded stick by stick on to a field vehicle; transferred to a road or rail vehicle by crane and later dumped or unloaded in the factory yard; then again picked up by crane and fed on to the cane table twelve to twenty-four hours later. There is no economic merit in this avoidable multiple handling, which is gradually disappearing.

The simplest way is for either hand-cut or machine-cut cane, is be windrowed concurrently and grab-loaded half a ton or so it a bite, 24 hours a day, into vehicles capable of being taken straight to the factory for tipping on to the cane table and soming back at once for more. The expensive double or even triple handling of yard storage is avoided. An alternative where labour is highly paid is the powered cape harvester which cuts, chops, and loads, also 24 hours a day, trailers which can be hauled streight to the factory for almost immediate

tipping on to the cane table.

In the Factory

Accounting techniques started improving enormously about twenty years ago. Till then the accounts were so-called "financial" accounts and any "actual" costing that was carried out was guite separate and usually incomplete. Some items of everhead expenditure only appeared once a year in the old financial accounts and were either ouitted, or estimated, for costing.

Nodern accounting has the standard costing figures integrated with the accounts which are published monthly, but only audited oder a year. This relatively new concept of accounting operates on added values. The raw natorial is the basic cost and all other expenditures incurred, including depreciation and loan interest, are added to the raw material and divided by the units of finished products produced each month.

Even in the seasonal sugar industry, with no manufacturing

for some months such year, means monthly accounting provider the controls monded. In the off-reason, the heavy maintenance programme is being carried out and the expenditure is accumulated in a capital account, which is written off monthly as an expense during the next campaign. Sales of sugar, molesses and perhaps beet pulp are continuing and are published in the monthly accounts too, which show the remaining stocks as well.

No multiplicity of ad hoc reports to the samager can be as reliable and useful as one set of suitably designed and up-to-date monthly accounts, in which all figures relate to the same instant in time - midnight on the last day of the previous "month" - which should be a period of four weeks. With integrated standard costing it is final able that the physical quantities handled in the processing operations appear, too, in the monthly accounts for the caupaign period.

It is desirable to allocate all expenditure to under a desen cost centres for each factory; e.g., the receiving yard for the sugar harvest; the juice extraction process; liming carbonatation and filtration; evaporation to thick juice; sugar boiling and the centrifugals; sugar drying, packaging and storage; administration, etc. An example is known of an over-enthusiastic young cost accountant who divided his factory into more than one thousand cost centres. This must have meant that the maintenance of each stairway as well as each motor pump and pressure gauge was individually recorded. Who would have the time and interest for such detailed costing was not apparent.

With just a few manageable cost centres, the actual standard costs per ton of crystal sugar processed during the empaign, and of off-season maintenance, can be usefully empared, stage by stage through the factory.

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